Mananbo which has chased the mail carriers several times. Apparently no one has ever been caught or injured by them. 776

The *tandroromalony* are mermaids. Three hours' march to the north of Ambohimanga there is a lake called *Andriamanjavola Varitra* which is one of their favorite haunts. On the edge of this, one sometimes sees two to four or more women sitting and working raffia or weaving. If approached, they dive into the lake and disappear. Two informants claimed to have seen them themselves. They are thoroughly human in appearance and very handsome. Four or five generations ago a man of the *Zafindrotry* gens made friends with one of them and she consented to marry him if he would never tell anyone that she was a *tandroromalony*. She came to his village and lived there for several years, bearing him two boys and two girls. Other men in the village often asked him where she came from and envied him his handsome wife. Finally, when drunk, he told them that she was a mermaid. One of their children overheard him and came running to ask her whether it was true. She was very angry and when he returned home she told him that she was going back to her people and would take the children with her. She took the children to the lake and gave each of them a hand of bananas, telling them to dive in and eat the whole bunch under water. Two, a girl and a boy, were able to do this and she plunged into the lake, taking them with her, and never returned. The other two returned to their father, grew up and married ordinary mortals. Their descendants still live in the village and are handsome and of fine physique. 776 777

The *tsimidoma anga* are inhabitants of the under world (see Cosmology). They are like men except that their noses are set crosswise on their faces. They never visit our world. 778

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

The cult of the dead is all-important in Tanala religion. It forms a complex of interwoven beliefs and practices. The Tanala Menabe believe that man is composed of three parts, the body, the *aina*, and the *ambiroa*. The *aina* is the life or vital force and is identified with the breath. It has no form or consciousness and leaves the body only at death. Its fate after death is not clear in the native mind. Some informants said that it ceased to exist, others that it returned to the *Zanahary* who had given it. 779

The word *ambiroa* signifies "the second part" or "the double." The *ambiroa* has consciousness, personality and form. It is, in fact,

the mind and soul of the individual inhabiting a body which is exactly like the fleshy body except that it is composed of much more tenuous matter. It preserves a certain detachment from the physical body even during life. It leaves the body during sleep, unconsciousness or insanity, and dreams and hallucinations are its actual experiences. It may also leave the body when the person is awake and sane, and may stay away for days or even weeks. The mind and body continue to function during its absence, but with reduced vigor, and if it stays away too long, the body dies. The natives cannot explain the inconsistency between this belief and the belief that the *ewiruame* and mind are inseparable. Apparently they have not analyzed their beliefs that far.

There is no connection between the *ewiruame* and the shadow. *Ewiruame* of both the dead and living are alike seen. They look exactly like the person but usually appear at a little distance and fade away if approached. Those of the living do not speak, but those of the dead sometimes do, counseling people or demanding sacrifices. *Ewiruame* of the living are seen most frequently when the person is ill, or when he is away from home and longing to return. They have no special significance and are not a sign of approaching death. *Ewiruame* of the dead appear most frequently in deserted villages, near tombs, or in lonely places. They are not dangerous unless offended and do not seem to be particularly feared, although such meetings are never sought by the living. I asked one informant whether it was a good or bad omen to encounter the *ewiruame* of a deceased relative and he answered emphatically: "A bad omen! He will ask you to sacrifice an ox to him."

The *ewiruame* of the living frequently meet and talk with the *ewiruame* of the dead in dreams, returning to their bodies with a memory of the encounter. This may also occur in trances. It is most frequent in the case of *owirúmi*, some of whom claim to be constantly directed in this way.

When the *ewiruame* is absent from the conscious body it goes to the place of the ancestors, just as if its body were dead, but when it returns all memory of its sojourn among them is effaced. A person whose *ewiruame* has left him is said to be *wiinirúnike*. It must be recalled as soon as possible, for if it is allowed to remain with the ancestors too long it will build a house and plant rice fields in the spirit world and will refuse to return. When an *owirúmi* has diagnosed a disease as being due to the absence of the *ewiruame*, a sort of mush is prepared by pounding and boiling a small wild grain. The

ambiroe squats on the floor with the pot of steaming mush between his feet and covers himself completely with a lowlo, inhaling as much of the steam as possible and taking a small sweet bath. When the mush has cooled he eats it. After this, his ambiroe will return. Maladies due to this cause to be fairly common and are often diagnosed and treated without calling in an ambiroy. If the sickness recurs frequently a charm against it may be worn. 774 155

The ambiroe leaves the body once for all in incurable insanity and at death. Apparently there is no idea that the insane are possessed. Their actions are due to the ambiroe, which continues to function in the absence of the ambiroe. If they are quiet and peaceful, their needs are provided for, but if they are troublesome, violent, or appear to be in pain, they are killed as quickly and painlessly as possible. If a corpse revives after the funeral ceremonies are well under way, its movements are also thought to be due to the ambiroe, and it is quietly strangled. 775

With a few exceptions, to be noted later, all ambiroe have the same fate after death. Ethical conduct while alive does not affect this, except that a person who has been formally disowned, a notorious sorcerer, or a man of extremely evil life, may be rejected by the spirits of his ancestors and refused a place in their village. Such souls become vagabonds, working evil upon the living and hanging about at sacrifices to intercept the good souls and seduce them into injuring their descendants. In some sacrificial rituals the ancestral spirits are asked to return to their village as soon as they have eaten and to be careful not to talk to any of these vagabonds whom they may meet on the way.

Souls who have been accepted by the ancestors live in villages and carry on an existence exactly like that while alive. They have their chiefs, marry, have children, build houses, plant rice and raise cattle, go on journeys, etc. When bodies are to be moved to a new tomb, the dead are given several days' notice with an admonition to pack their baggage and recall any of their number who are away. Their state is thought to be somewhat more felicitous than that of the living, but they are not exempt from troubles and even sickness. In one ritual the souls are requested to take a share of the offering to any of their number who may be absent through illness. Each soul has exactly the same form as its body at the time of death, even to mutilations and deformities.

The location of the spirit villages is not clear in the native mind. Several informants said that the ambiroe lived on Mount Ambon-